

International Crossroads

Missouri Southern State University - Joplin

Summer 2004

Lifestyles
City Highlights
Commerce &
Politics
Education



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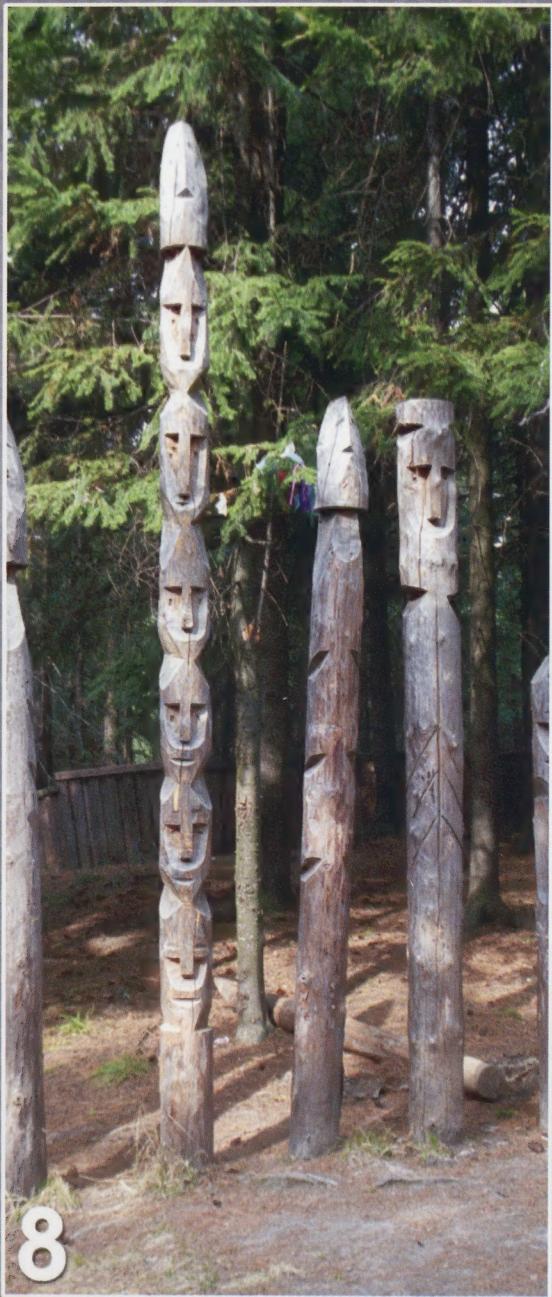


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From Russia With Awe: Russia moves to the top of my list.

I really had no idea what to expect when I heard I would be heading to Russia right after finals. I am not the type of person to stereotype an entire culture, so I dismissed any stereotypes I knew about Russia beforehand.

The worst part was not knowing any of the language except *da, nyet* and *da svidiya*. It was funny when Andy and I spent our layover in Stockholm learning the Cyrillic alphabet from Dr. Tatiana Karmanova, so we could at least read street signs and metro stops, a task I must say I got pretty good at.

Maybe it was having been awake for 30 hours, after having only five hours of sleep the night before I left, but during the taxi ride from the airport to the hotel in Moscow, I could not help but feel I was in Moscow 20 years ago, still under Soviet control. The streets seemed gloomy and the air felt unfavorable to foreigners. Admittedly, maybe my movie perception of Russia was leaking out some. I learned quickly that all the advertisements on the streets, on buildings, above the streets and so on would not have been there 20 years ago, and this quickly destroyed the imposed feeling. I was ready to fully encompass Russia in all its glory.

First was Moscow; well first, third and fifth. Standing on Red Square staring, dumb struck, at the imposing site of the Kremlin and St. Basil's Cathedral, it was hard to imagine tanks rolling over the Square. This was especially difficult to imagine with Lenin's mausoleum sitting under the high Kremlin wall. Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately depending on how you look at it, we did not have the time to pay the Bolshevik

leader a visit during his visiting hours.

After a few days in Moscow, Dr. Karmanova sent Andy and I to Siberia, thankfully not in exile.

OK, another stereotype slipped through. I packed for winter weather for this excursion, but the weather was actually pleasant, with temperatures in the low to mid 20s — centigrade. The flight there was an adventure in itself. Of course we had never before heard of UTAir, but again I felt I was back in Soviet times. The plane was a Soviet-era Tupolev TU-134, and the interior was all red, except the actual cabin walls and ceiling. Nothing but Russian could be heard, but we were thankful when the announcements were in English following the Russian announcements.

Khanty-Mansiysk was wonderful. I experienced true Russian hospitality as almost everyone we met gave us some sort of gift. Here I also realized why Russian women are considered some of the most beautiful in the world. Maybe I just was not looking in Moscow, but I did not see as many attractive women there. Of course, being surrounded by a group of English students, all female, all curious about us, probably helped this notion.

I truly felt at home in this quiet little town, except twice when Andy and I had to speak to a crowd; those times I just felt like a side-show attraction.

After heading back to Moscow (on a similar plane, but with blue interior), we headed to St. Petersburg. The atmosphere in St. Petersburg was much more relaxed than Moscow. The only problem was the mosquitoes.

Anything to be found could be found on one street — Nevsky Prospekt. This 2.5 kilometer (just more than a mile) street was full of small shops, restaurants and cafes, all with unique settings. In St. Petersburg, or the Venice of the north, you

could never run out of things to do.

Also, that rumor about Russian women proved even truer in St. Petersburg than in either of the other two cities, with a few exceptions in both.

All-in-all, I loved the short time I spent in Russia. The people I met were some of the nicest people I have ever met. The nation is full of so much history and culture it would take several lifetimes to learn about and experience all of it.

Russia is the seventh country I have had the pleasure to visit, and it is definitely near the top of my list of favorite countries I have been to (along with England and France).

Without a doubt, I will return to Russia.



T.J. Gerlach



T.J. Gerlach with Yugorsky students.

T.J. Gerlach

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Note:
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Experience proves to be fun, educational.

All my friends would ask me, "Russia? Why are you going to Russia?"

Russia had always been a country of mystery to me, as I'm sure it still is for many.

I suppose this is why Missouri Southern has chosen Russia to be our fall 2004 semester theme. Most Americans my age know very little about this country, the largest country in the world in terms of area.

In no way can I fit everything there is to know about such a huge country with so much history in one magazine. I do hope that through my stories and photos presented in this issue, I can provide just a small glimpse into the present day Russian life.

Following are some pieces of information and experiences taken from my journal entries throughout the two-week adventure.



Andy Tevis

Top 10 questions asked by Russians during our visit

10. How did you get here?
9. What kind of car do you drive?
8. Have you tried our vodka?
7. Do you like Russia?
6. What kind of music and movies do you like?
5. What's your opinion on the war in Iraq?
4. Are you voting for Bush during the next election?
3. Do you have a girlfriend?
2. Are you married?
1. What do you think of Russian girls?

Russian women

Upon my announcement that I was going to Russia, my German roommate jokingly told me that Eastern European women are the most beautiful in the world.

While going to college, I've met many beautiful girls from Eastern Europe but also from other parts of the world. There

are beautiful girls everywhere I told myself (thinking of my beautiful Japanese girlfriend). During almost every interview or conversation while in Russia, people would ask, "What do you think of our girls here?" This occurred over and over. They would say, "We have beautiful girls here, don't we?"

"Well every country has its share of beautiful women," I would say.

After about 10 days in Russia, visiting three cities, I finally broke down.

Russian girls are amazing.

It was at this time that I learned not to hesitate in any way whatsoever when a Russian girl asked my opinion on Russian women. A prompt, "Russian women are beautiful," seemed to make them happy. I'm a slow learner.

Mail-order brides

As sexist as it may be, one Russian put it this way:

"It's easier to teach a Russian woman English than it is to teach an American girl how to be a woman." Enough said.

Exiled

Throughout Russian history, Siberia has always been the place where people are sent in exile. While in Moscow everybody kept asking, "Why are you going to Siberia?"

Little did they know, the weather in Khanty-Mansiysk was better than that of Moscow. I met some of the nicest people in Siberia and had some of the best experiences. You can exile me to Siberia any day.

Russia is big

While talking about an Orthodox church in Siberia, a man said to me "this is the largest orthodox church in Asia." "Wow ... I guess I am in Asia," I thought to myself, remembering how large of a country Russia truly is. Russia spreads across 12 geographical time zones.

Journal excerpt (day 8)

I'm riding in a small Soviet-built plane from Khanty-Mansiysk to Moscow over the Ural Mountains. It's about a two-hour

flight. The plane is full of passengers and it's hot as hell. There must have been some kind of mechanism under the floor causing heat because my feet and legs were especially warm. There was no air circulation in the plane.

All I could think about was the two huge fish I had stored in the overhead compartment above me.

They were about two feet long and wrapped in newspaper.



A woman gave them to me as a gift to deliver to Dr. Tatiana Karmanova in Moscow. The small Siberian town of Khanty-Mansiysk is known for having delicious salmon. It didn't help that the flight attendant crammed someone else's luggage into the same small compartment.

Luckily they served fish as our in-flight meal and my little friends, wrapped in newspaper, went unnoticed.

So how was Russia?

The big question asked by everyone upon my arrival home.

Russia was good to me.

Overall, I had an amazing time. I met so many genuinely kind people, had some amazing experiences and made some good memories.

I will be excited to see what happens to Russia during my lifetime. Much has changed there in the last 15 years, and the next 15 years hold just as much if not more change.

Russians know how to enjoy life.

While visiting one country for two weeks, I learned more than I could during two years in classrooms. Thank you Russia. Thank you Missouri Southern.

Andy Tevis

To Live In Russia

Stories & Photos by Andy Tevis



Soviet-era apartments block the view from Stanislav Belov's bedroom window.

"Life is good for young people; there are many chances to make changes in their lives," said Vladimir Supik, a professor at Moscow State University for the last 20 years. *"There are more possibilities for the young."*

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Wearing a Jimi Hendrix shirt, Stanislav Belov stands in his room in the apartment where he lives with his parents.

College student describes his life.

One may find an interest in the differences between cultures, but sometimes more notable are the similarities.

Walking into the gray, featureless Soviet-era apartment building on the outskirts of Moscow gives the feeling of being in Russia. But walking into the room of 19-year-old Stanislav Belov, the scene looks quite American.

Posters cover every inch of his bedroom walls. Bob Marley, The Grateful Dead, Cypress Hill and Nirvana all have their place.

"I listen to mostly American music," Belov said.

Looking at his CD rack would very

quickly prove this to be true.

Belov studies at the Russian University of Statistics and Economics. He spends much of his time studying and working on his computer. Like many American students, Belov names music, sports and computers as some of his favorite pastimes.

He also spends a lot of time with friends, driving around in his Russian-built Lada and hanging out in parks.

One hobby he has, although atypical according to his friends, is modeling. Belov's face can be seen on Russian television commercials and in magazine advertisements.

"It was a surprise for me," Belov said. "I

met a man, and he asked if I wanted to be seen in some ads, and I gave him a call. It's a good earning of money. Maybe it will be my hobby, but it's not my career."

Belov said he wants to come to the United States to visit but not to live.

He has lived in Moscow all his life.

"It's my native city, and I love it. I don't think that I could live anywhere else," he said.

Belov said there are not too many differences between American and Russian students.

"I think it's just a difference in where you are," Belov said. "I think we are the same."



Juliya Ershova, left, Anna Sobornova, Anya Dryomina and Oxana Katerendhuk all attend the Moscow State Linguistics University.

Four students studying linguistics speak about Russian life.

Four students from the Moscow State Linguistics University decided to skip their class for the chance to speak with a few Americans at a bar. Anna Sobornova, 19, and Oxana Katerendhuk, 21, were not so talkative. However, the others had a few things to say.

The students said they do not have many chances to talk with native English speakers.

"We have more opportunities to speak with Spaniards," said 20-year-old Anya Dryomina.

"I do not like English so much," said 20-year-old Juliya Ershova.

Ershova said she is learning English so she can get a tourism-related job. However, she said she would prefer to find a job using her Spanish skills.

The four women said they don't need jobs

while attending school.

"Students usually don't have jobs," Dryomina said.

Like most American students, they said they usually work during the summer when there is no school.

"Last year I worked as an interpreter translating documents at the parliament building," Ershova said.

She said friends of her mother recommended her for the job.

Dryomina said finding jobs after completing college can be difficult.

"In our country everything depends on the connections of our parents," Dryomina said.

Young Russians typically have closer relationships with their parents than Americans.

The four students said they all live at home with their parents.

During their free time, when they are not

studying, they said they like to go to the theater. Ershova said she likes American movies but prefers to watch those made in Russia.

"Our films are different than yours," Ershova said.

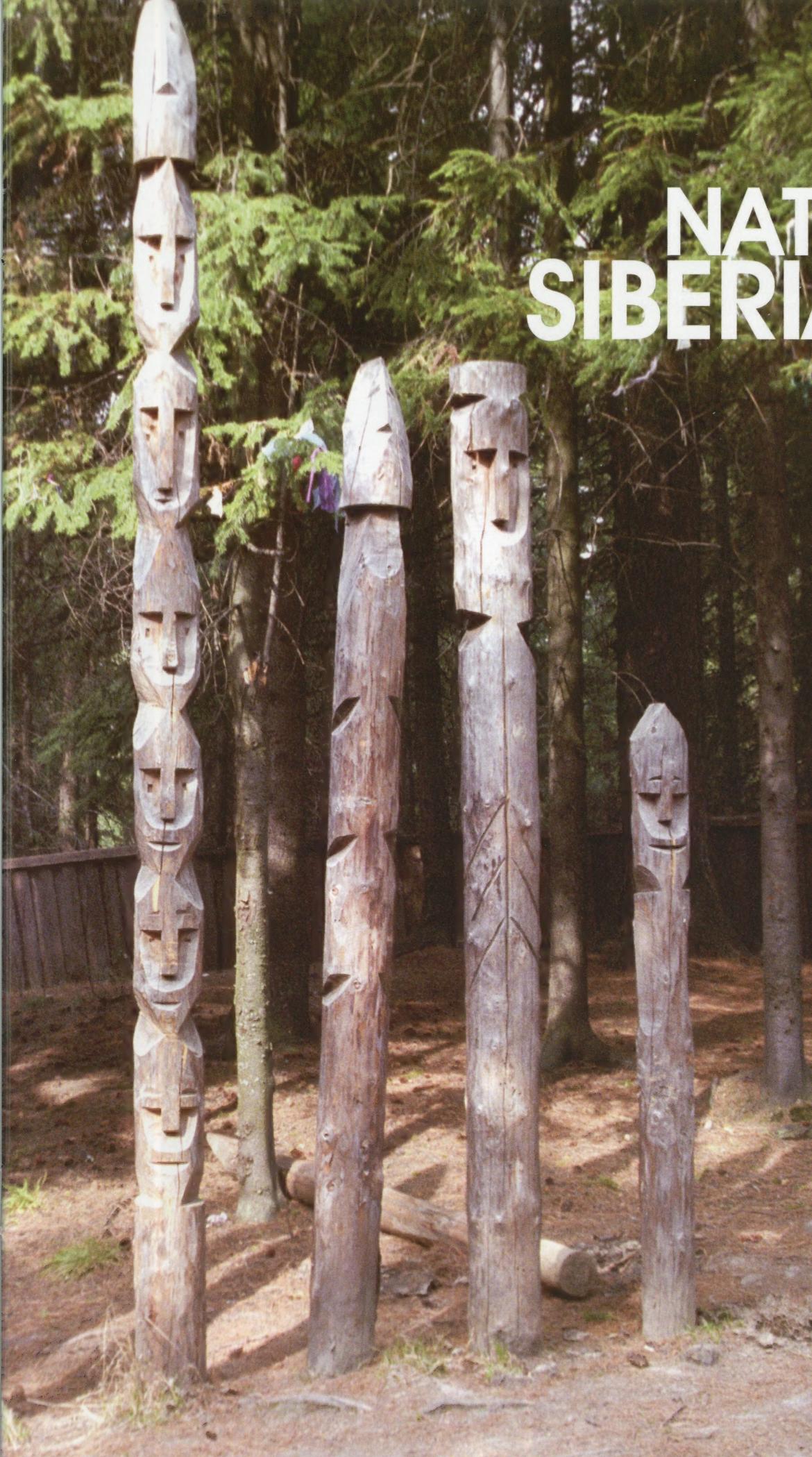
"They are kinder and devoted to some idea."

Two films they recommended were *Barber Of Siberia* and *Burned By the Sun*.

Besides films, the students expressed some dislike about something else from America.

They said they are against many of the decisions the Bush administration has made.

"Concerning the war in Iraq, I think it is the general opinion that Bush and the American government treat Iraqi citizens very cruelly," Ershova said. 



NATIVE SIBERIANS

Story & Photos
by T.J. Gerlach

Khanty and
Mansi people
settle valley
and lend
their names
to the region.

The Khanty people
worshipped using
totems devoted to
the clan.

Contrary to popular belief, Siberia was not a land devoid of humans. Many native tribes settled the lands long before any Russian settlements were created. Two of these tribes, the Khanty and the Mansi, lived near the Ob and Irtysh Rivers, lending their names to the region, Khanty-Mansiysk.

About 22,000 Khanty people reside in Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug, Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, and the Tomsk region. Khanty people are divided into three ethnic groups depending on where they are located: northern, southern and eastern. Each group has its own dialect of the Khanty language, culture and economic qualities.

The Khanty people are believed to have descended from Uralic tribes who participated in hunting and fishing and from Andronovo livestock-raising tribes. The Khanty started ruling themselves after the Mongols were driven out of Russia.

In the 17th century, the Russian government tried to impose control over the Khanty by introducing Christianity, but the tribe did not accept the change and kept its lifestyle fairly stagnant until the 19th century. At that time, the Khanty began to accept state legislation, though their numbers rose during the 20th century.

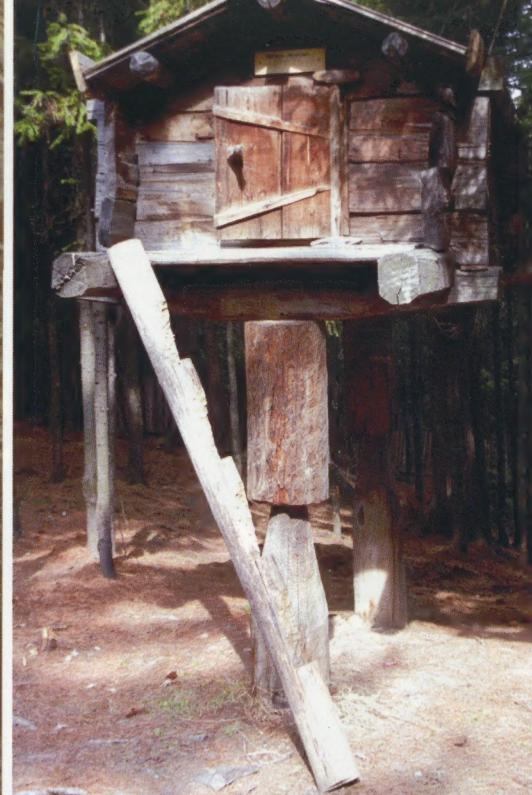
The Mansi people number about 8,000 today and are spread about the tributaries of the Ob River in western Siberia. The language has seven dialects, which vary so greatly they cannot be mutually understood. The Mansi people evolved from a combination of Neolithic Uralic people, Ugric people and Indo-Iranians. When Russians first encountered the Mansi, the Mansi had a complex societal structure, including military organizations, some of which opposed the Russians. Eventually, the Mansi submitted to Russian rule, and the tribes were baptized in the 18th century.

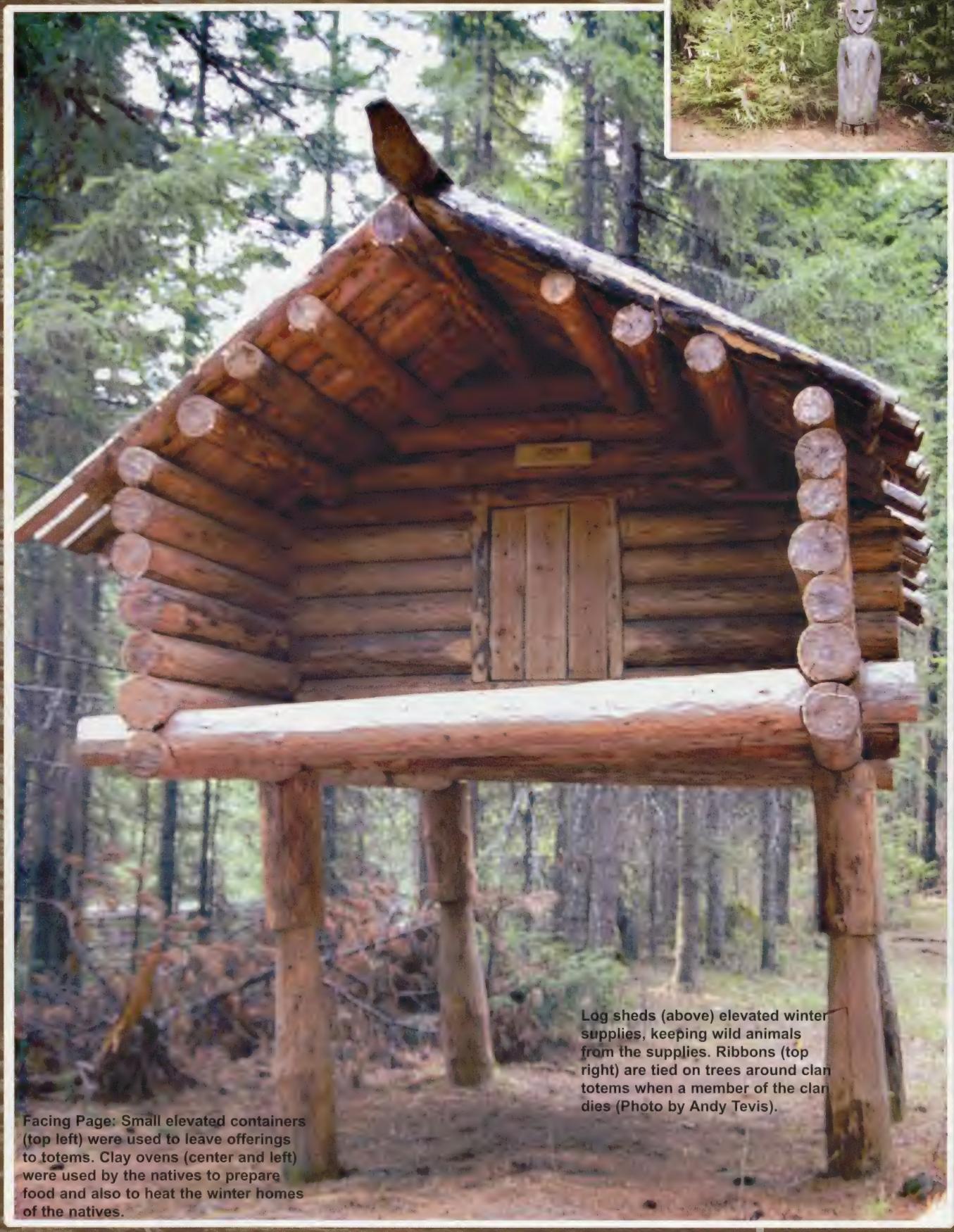
Both the Khanty and the Mansi thrived off hunting, fishing and reindeer herding. Minor industries for the tribes included livestock husbandry and farming. Both tribes resided in log houses with low roofs. Clay ovens were used for both cooking and heating in the winter. Elevated log sheds were used to store food and supplies to prevent wild animals from getting into the supplies. During summer months, when the tribe was on the move, tepee-like tents were set up as homes.

Both the Khanty and the Mansi regarded the bear as a sacred creature. The tribes had festivals celebrating the bear. Both had rites to perform before hunting bears and eating bear meat. The Mansi also divided the world into three parts: the sky, the earth and the subterranean. Each part was occupied by spirits, and every spirit had a specific task.

The Khanty worshipped using clan totems. Before hunting and fishing seasons, totems were given sacrifices. Unlike most native tribes of America, the native populations of Siberia still thrive. Their languages are still used and many still live traditional lifestyles.

Information for this article came from the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North www.raipon.org. 





Facing Page: Small elevated containers (top left) were used to leave offerings to totems. Clay ovens (center and left) were used by the natives to prepare food and also to heat the winter homes of the natives.

Log sheds (above) elevated winter supplies, keeping wild animals from the supplies. Ribbons (top right) are tied on trees around clan totems when a member of the clan dies (Photo by Andy Tevis).



Roman Kirillov is a 25-year-old reporter at *Izvestia*, one of Moscow's oldest newspapers.

"Advertising is different in Russia. Reporters expect money for doing a story about a company. People pay the paper to avoid bad stories."



Reporting in Russia

Story & Photos by Andy Tevis

Journalist describes what it's like to work at one of the country's largest newspapers.

On October 19, 2002, a car bomb exploded outside a Moscow McDonald's restaurant. Roman Kirillov was in the right place at the right time to get the story.

Kirillov, a 25-year-old philology major at the Peoples Friendship University of Russia, was working an unpaid job similar to an internship at one of Moscow's largest daily papers, *Izvestia* (*News*). After his first on-the-spot news story about the car bombing, *Izvestia* hired Kirillov as a full-time reporter.

Founded in 1917 before the socialist revolution, *Izvestia* soon became the official national publication of the Soviet Union.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the newspaper was turned over to the employees and eventually bought by billionaire Vladimir Potanin's media company. During Russia's transition to a market economy, Potanin acquired control of more than 20 formerly state-owned enterprises.

With a circulation of 234,500, *Izvestia* remains one of Russia's most popular newspapers. Since the newspaper has print shops located throughout the country, it's often the only newspaper available in smaller provinces.

Kirillov said he has learned a great deal

since he began working at the newspaper. Kirillov finds Russian newspapers much different than those in the United States.

"Before 1991, the newspapers were controlled by the state," Kirillov said. "After the collapse of the Soviet Union, media tycoons began to take control."

He said many changes have occurred in the Russian media since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

"The media began to develop on the basis of advertising," Kirillov said.

The newspapers in Russia are currently in the same position as newspapers were in the United States during the 1920s.

"People pay the paper to avoid bad stories," Kirillov said.

"We have black lists and white lists," Kirillov said. "Some people don't want to be on our pages, some do."

He said some people recently died in a company's mini bus.

When the newspaper tried to do a story about the accident, the reporter was told to see his boss. The story was eventually printed, but certain facts were intentionally left out.

"Advertising is different in Russia," Kirillov said. "Reporters expect money for doing a story about a company. People pay the paper to avoid bad stories."

Kirillov said Russian newspapers do not have the same amount of credibility as papers like *The Washington Post*. 



Building With a Strong Foundation

Story & Photos by Andy Tevis



After 70 years of nonexistence, members rebuild Orthodox church in Siberia.

It's 11 a.m. on a Sunday morning. The day's service had concluded at the Protection of the Mother of God Church. Churchgoers lingered outside and chatted with friends; some sat on benches and waited for a ride, others walked the streets of the small Siberian town called Khanty-Mansiysk.

A few women immediately took off their head scarves as they exited the church. The Orthodox religion traditionally requires women to cover their heads while in church. Some women choose to keep their heads covered all day.

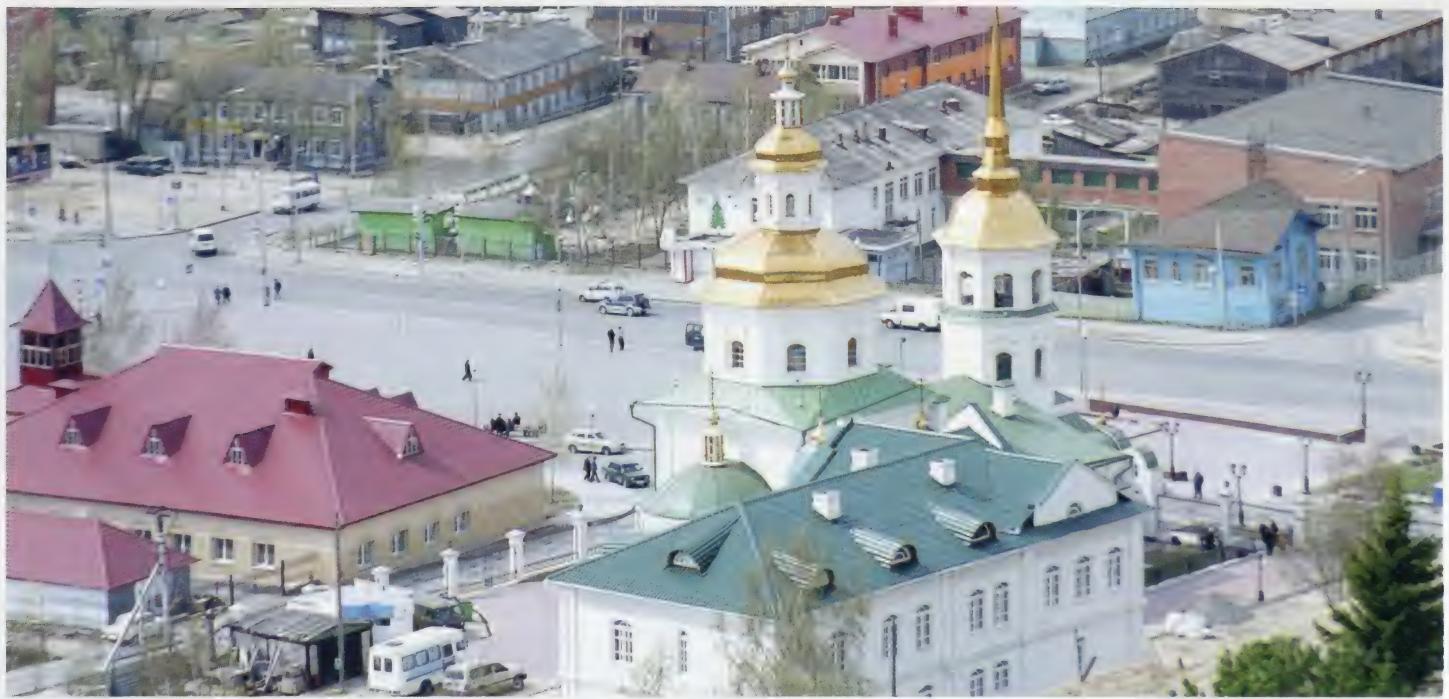
After milling around outside for a few minutes, permission was given to enter the church. Candles were burning, and the strong smell of incense still lingered.

A handful of women were thoroughly cleaning the inside of the church. One woman mopped the floor on her hands and knees; another was meticulously scrapping excess wax from the base of a gold candleholder. Traditionally, women do all the cleaning inside an Orthodox church.

Directly opposite the front entrance of the church was the main altar. On both sides of the church was a special wing, each devoted to an individual. The right wing of the church was devoted to Mother Abalak, the protector of Siberia. The left wing of the church was devoted to St. Nicolas. The center altar was dedicated to Jesus and the events surrounding his life and death.

The walls of the church were covered in elaborate paintings called icons, a characteristic of all Russian Orthodox churches. Most icons depicted biblical scenes. Some were portraits of saints. Many of the icons portrayed Jesus and could be read like biblical stories. They were all immaculately painted using a large amount of gold paint. The frames were also gold.

"St. Nicolas is the greatest saint of the Orthodox church," Father Sergey said. "He is the person most Westerners associate



"The revolution destroyed our religion's empire."

with Santa Claus." Father Sergey was dressed in a black robe, the traditional attire of an Orthodox priest.

He walked around the inside of the church, patiently explaining some of the icons.

As he talked, members of the church were walking around the room, stopping at icons one at a time to pray. They kissed the frames of the icons with respect, bowed and performed the sign of the cross before moving on to the next one.

Even though service for the day was over, people continued to flow in and out of the church.

However, members of the Protection of the Mother of God Church have not always been able to practice their religion the way they were on this day.

The church was originally constructed during 1816 at one of the oldest settlements in Siberia, Samarovo. Sergey said the Orthodox religion has existed in Siberia since 1620. Missionaries began to come to the area as early as the 13th century.

Samarovo is now a historical district located on the outskirts of the city of

Khanty-Mansiysk.

During 1920, when the socialist revolution began, the Protection of the Mother of God Church was destroyed.

The early years of the revolution brought a great deal of persecution toward all religions. The churches lost all rights, including their right to own property. The government took control of all buildings and valuables owned by the churches.

During the time when the church was destroyed, Sergey said he remembers watching children play football on the foundation.

"The revolution destroyed our religion's empire," said Vladimir Potikha, a member of the Orthodox Church. "What they did not take away from us by 1970 they took in the '80s."

In 1996, five years after the fall of the Soviet Union, reconstruction began at the original foundation of the Protection of the Mother of God Church.

On October 14, 2000, the church was finished, and a consecration ceremony took place.

"In the last 20 years, things changed greatly," Potikha said. 



(Top) The Protection of the Mother of God Church sits in the oldest part of Khanty-Mansiysk. (Above) A woman exits the church following a Sunday morning service.

The Third Rome

Story & Photos by T.J. Gerlach



Russian Orthodox Church maintains traditions of Byzantium.

More than 1,000 years ago, Russia adopted Orthodoxy from Constantinople.

Orthodox Christianity is a highly traditional denomination. Religious depictions in churches or cathedrals are not cast in statuary or stained glass, as with Catholicism.

Orthodox churches use icons, or painted depictions of Christ, saints or religious or biblical scenes. The icons are displayed on a wall, known as the iconostasis, which stands to the east, opposite the entry door.

Father Sergey, of the Protection of the Mother of God Church in Khanty-Mansiysk, said traditionally, icons are arranged in five tiers on an iconostasis.

The uppermost tier is known as the patriarch tier and usually includes icons like Moses and Abraham. The second tier is called the prophets tier, depicting the prophecies of the coming of Christ. The middle tier, or the church feasts tier, concerns events of the New Testament, especially the lives of Christ and the Virgin. Icons depicting Christ, John the Baptist,

the Virgin and saints, appear in the fourth tier, called the diesis tier. The icon of Christ is central in this tier, and traditionally the second icon to the right depicts the saint or event for which the church was named.

The bottom tier is the worship tier, where some icons are changed depending on the time of year or saint worshipped during a certain time.

Some iconostasis also have a sixth tier on the bottom that would be called the local row, where local saints and icons would be displayed.

Orthodox churches are designed so worshippers enter from the west. Onion domes, which top many churches, are an architectural tradition that have their origins from Byzantium.

Behind the iconostasis lies the sanctuary, where the altar is placed. Three doors or curtains in the iconostasis open to reveal the sanctuary behind. The sanctuary is considered the most sacred place of all Orthodoxy and is only opened during services.

Orthodox clergy dress in black robes and wear a cross



St. Isaac's Cathedral in St. Petersburg (top) is an exception to traditional Russian Orthodox churches. Peter the Great wanted it to resemble great Catholic cathedrals. The Cathedral of the Epiphany in St. Petersburg (above) once had sailors' barracks on the grounds, earning it the nickname "the Sailor's Church."



"The sanctuary is considered the most sacred place of all Orthodoxy and is only opened during services."

around their necks. Churches contain no pews or seats — worshippers stand during services. Females cannot enter a church without a head covering. All worshippers cross themselves while facing an icon above the door when entering and exiting a church.

The Orthodox Church uses the Julian calendar, thus Christmas falls on January 7. Also, Easter is the major holiday of the year instead of Christmas.

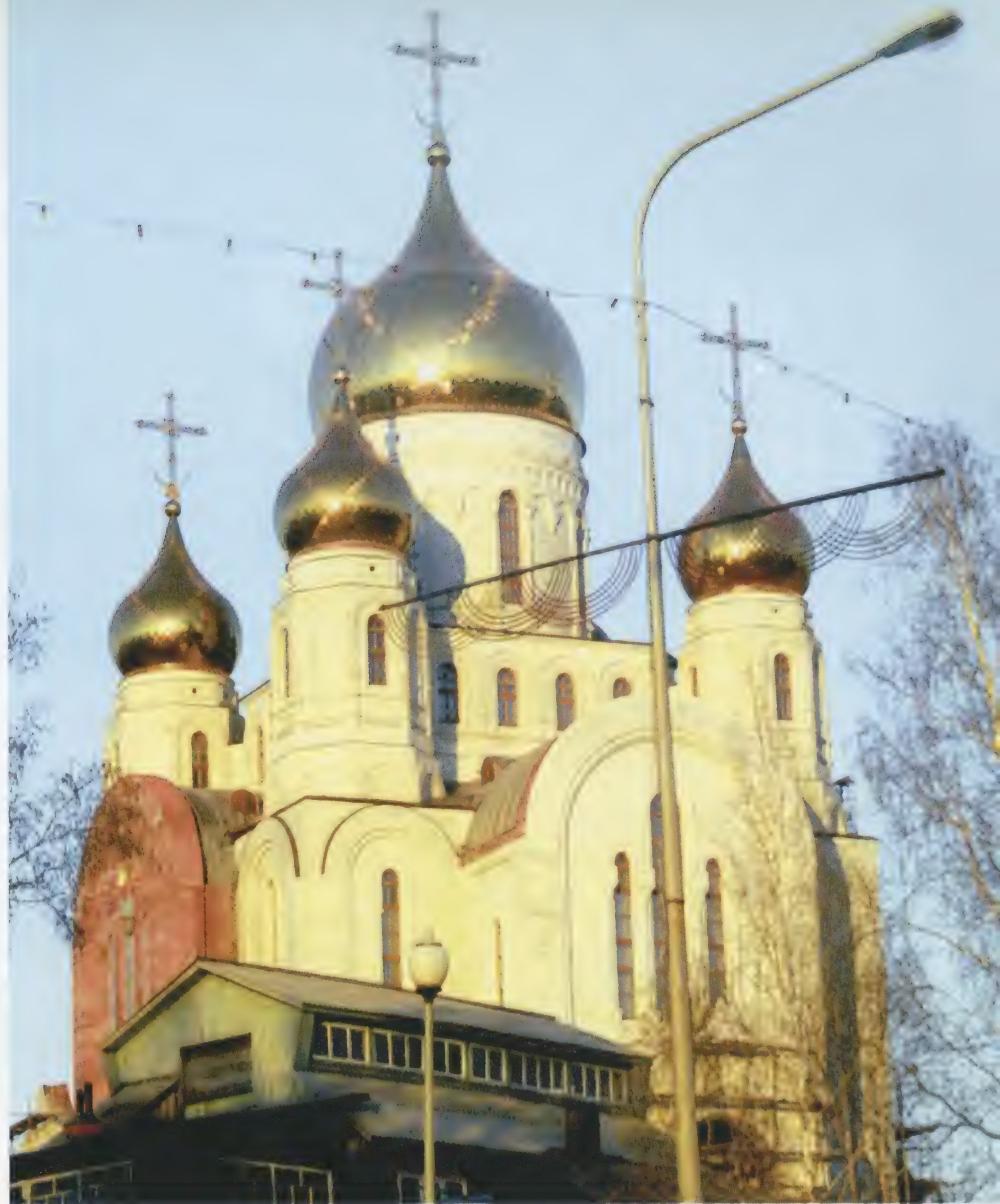
The Russian Orthodox Church began in 988, when Prince Vladimir of Kiev adopted Orthodox Christianity from the Byzantine Empire. Because of this, the church originally was under the Patriarch of Constantinople. In 1448, the Russian Orthodox Church separated from the

Patriarch of Constantinople.

When Constantinople, considered a second Rome, was taken over by the Turks in 1453, Moscow began to become known as "the third Rome." The Metropolitan of Moscow and all Rus(sia) was elevated to Patriarch of Moscow and all Rus(sia) about 100 years later, separating the church from other Orthodox churches.

After the Bolshevik revolution, most church property was seized. When Joseph Stalin took power, he had the more outspoken Orthodox leaders arrested. However, when the Great Patriotic War started in 1941 (World War II), Stalin lessened his persecution because he realized the great unifying power of the church.

Nikita Khrushchev renewed the persecu-



St. Basil's Cathedral in Moscow (left) exemplifies how intricately decorated Russian churches can be. Onion domes (above) are an architectural feature adopted from Constantinople. Some Orthodox crosses (below) feature an upturned crescent at the bottom, symbolizing Russia's victory over the Muslim Turks in the 18th century.

tion of the church, closing approximately 15,000 churches. After the Soviet Union collapsed, the church began a slow rebuilding process. Closed churches are being reconstructed and restored nationwide. Today, Russia has some 25,000 active churches, compared to more than 50,000 before the revolution and around 7,000 20 years ago.

Information for this story came from Russian Orthodox Church, http://www.mospat.ru/e_start-page.



Andy Tevis

Russia's 'Little Water'

Story & Photos by Andy Tevis



A bartender at Moscow's Petrov-Vodkin Restaurant pours a healthy-sized shot. The restaurant carries more than 300 different types of Vodka.

Age-old drinking tradition still thrives.

Russians have a worldwide reputation as consumers and producers of vodka. This is no myth. Some stereotypes are just true.

“Vodka is a part of Russian history; it’s a symbol of our hospitality,” said Alexander Belov, a Moscow restaurant owner and vodka connoisseur.

Russia’s love of vodka goes back centuries. The history of the drink is sometimes arguable. Both the Polish and the Russians claim to have first produced vodka. No matter who produced the drink first, Russia was the first country to fully embrace it. Russia’s influence on the drink can be seen through the worldwide use of the word vodka, which means “little water” in the Russian language.

According to internetwines.com, vodka is a distillate mixed with 60 percent water. Differences in tastes of Vodka can be found in the type of grain used, water and distillation process. Among the most popular ingredients are rye, wheat, barley, corn, potato or beet. There is a common misconception that most, if not all, vodkas are made from potatoes. The majority of vodkas in the world are actually distilled from grain (corn, wheat or rye).

The art of making fine vodka has a famous history in Russia. Passed on from generation to generation, it was practiced by noblemen and czars alike. It is said that even Peter the Great created his own recipes.

In the old days, the vodka distillation process was not as efficient as it is today. Much of the vodka contained impurities and often tasted bad. To cover up these foul tastes, vodka producers would add flavors such as pepper. Many vodka companies now produce flavored vodka for the sake of tradition and popularity rather than necessity — pepper, lemon, honey and cranberry to name a few. Over time, the distillation process has significantly improved, giving consumers a clean almost tasteless alcohol; this is one reason why the alcohol became so popular in the United States. Drink mixers found they could mix vodka with almost anything.

Most Russians drink vodka straight, flavor or no flavor.

Through observations and discussions during a visit to Russia, it does not take long for one to discover the drinking habits of the Russian people.

For many, drinking vodka seems purely social. In Russian cities the size of Joplin, people drinking and socializing fill the parks and squares during all hours of the night. In bad weather, friends drink together in their homes or at bars. Vodka is of course not the

only drink. Beer seems to be making a steady rise among younger adults who have been influenced by their Western European neighbors. Vodka, however, is the drink that Russians claim as their own.

Many claim they like vodka for various reasons. Some say it helps pass the time during boring subway rides. Some claim it helps people bond. Others say it has medicinal values.

One person pointed out that in the United States, countless people rely heavily on medications and psychiatrists to solve personal problems. In Russia there’s no need for any of that stuff. Russians have vodka. Vodka is more than just a drink to most Russians.

“Vodka cures everything,” said Tatiana Kondrashova of Moscow.

It’s a way of psychiatric treatment for some, for others it is a way to pass the time. Whatever the purpose, it’s a part of the Russian culture that has existed for a long time and continues to thrive today.

Others say it creates problems.

“The bad side of it (vodka) is the alcoholism problem that we have,” Belov said.

Russia’s rate of alcohol consumption is traditionally among the highest in the world. The BBC recently reported that in 2002, more than 40,000 Russians died from alcohol poisoning.

“Alcoholism is a big problem in our country,” said Anya Dryomina, a 20-year-old student at Moscow State Linguistics University. “In the winter it is very cold and many people tend to drink.”

Whatever reason people have to drink or not to drink, vodka is Russian. 



“Vodka cures everything.”



How to drink

Russians drink vodka straight, served cold, in a shot glass. A toast is always given, especially before the first shot. Sometimes pickles, mushrooms or bread are served along with the shots.

A Russian toast

A glass for the vodka, for the beer a mug, and for the table, cheerful company.



Moments In Moscow

Photos by Andy Tevis



FACES OF RUSSIA

(Above) Traditional matryoshka dolls sit at a vendor's booth for sale at the Izmailovsky market in Moscow.

(Left) A Moscow woman walks toward the Red Square. In old Russian the word for red and beautiful are the same, so in Russian it would be "beautiful square."

Russia's capital city has a population of nearly 10 million, making it the largest city in the country. Founded in 1147, it's a city rich in history and culture. Much of the country's wealth also lies in Moscow. *Forbes Magazine* reported that 31 of Russia's 36 billionaires claim Moscow as their residence. "Moscow is different," said Anna Britaeva, from Vladikavkaz, a 27-year-old living in Moscow. "People have more opportunities for success in the city."



SHOPPING

Shoppers ride the escalators at the Okhotny Ryad, a mall located in the very heart of Moscow on the Manezh Square. Calvin Klein, Diesel, ECCO, SASCH and Tommy Hilfiger are just a few of the shops located in this mall.

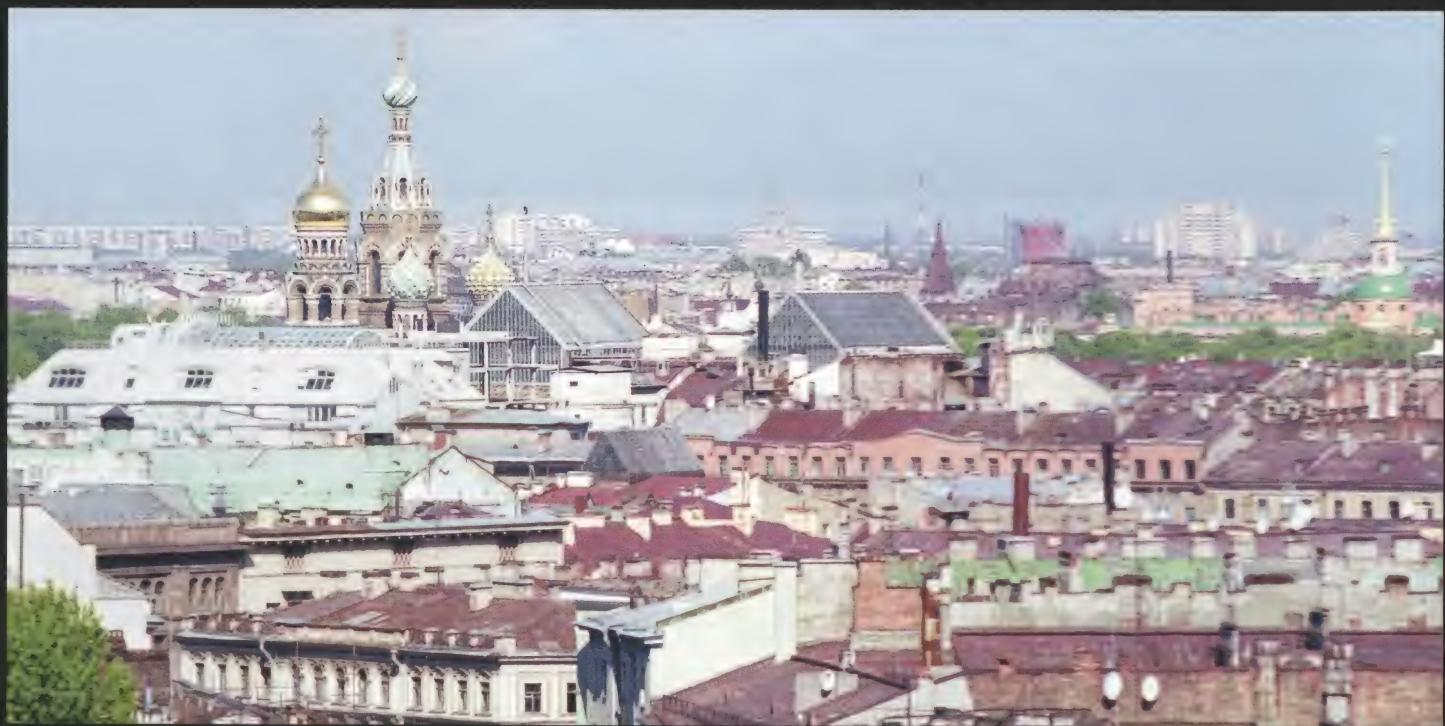


FROM COMMUNIST TO CAPITALIST

(Top) Some Russians complain about all of the advertisements that have appeared in Moscow since the introduction of capitalism. (Above) The Soviet Union's hammer and sickle sits atop the Hotel Ukraine. After the fall of the Soviet Union, President Boris Yeltsin put much effort into the removal of relics representing Russia's Soviet past. Statues were removed, names of streets were changed and Leningrad was renamed St. Petersburg. President Putin has been less enthusiastic about erasing Russia's Soviet past. He points out that it is an important part of history that cannot be forgotten. As a result, some Soviet-era symbols have been returned to Russia, including the Soviet national anthem, with revised lyrics.

Introducing St. Petersburg

By the order of Peter the Great, construction of the city began in 1703. Russia's main link to the open sea soon replaced Moscow as the country's capital in 1712. In an attempt to Russianize the city's name during World War I, Nicholas II changed it to Petrograd. The Soviets later returned the capital to Moscow and renamed the city Leningrad. After the fall of the Soviet Union, St. Petersburg returned. More than four million Russians now call St. Petersburg home.



PETER'S CITY

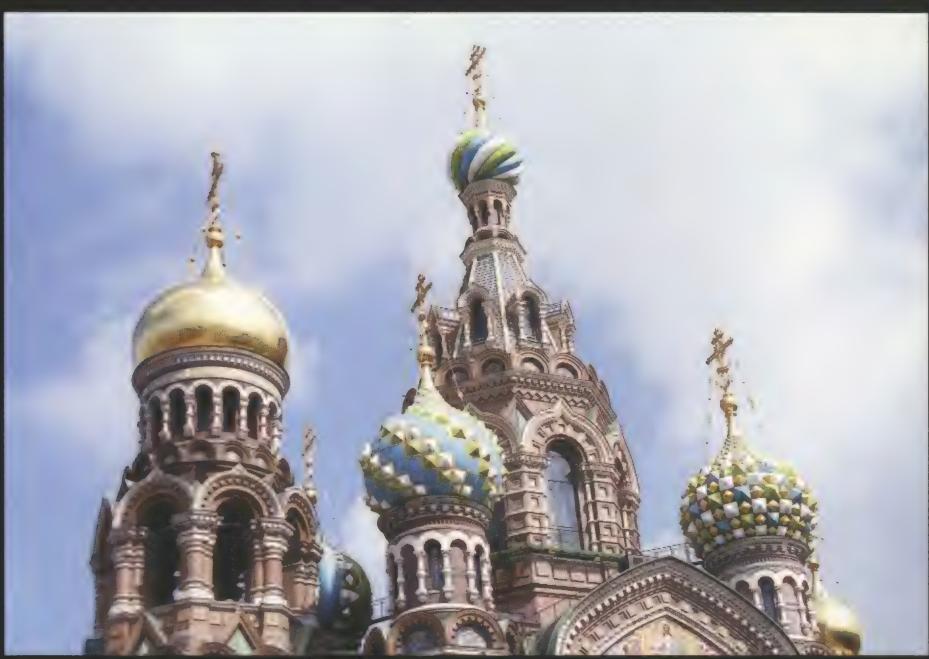
(Above) The skyline of St. Petersburg is colored by rooftops and highlighted by the Church of the Resurrection. Upon Peter the Great's request, St. Petersburg was originally modeled after Western European cities, such as Amsterdam and London, by Europe's most imaginative architects. (Opposite page) The Moscow-styled Cathedral of the Church of the Resurrection stands out in the European center of the city with its bright colored mosaics. It was built on the spot where Tsar Alexander II was murdered in 1881. The church was used to store potatoes during Soviet times and restored in the early 1990s. (Right) St. Petersburg's Hermitage Museum houses more than three million works of art and treasures including those of Rembrandt, Monet and Van Gogh.

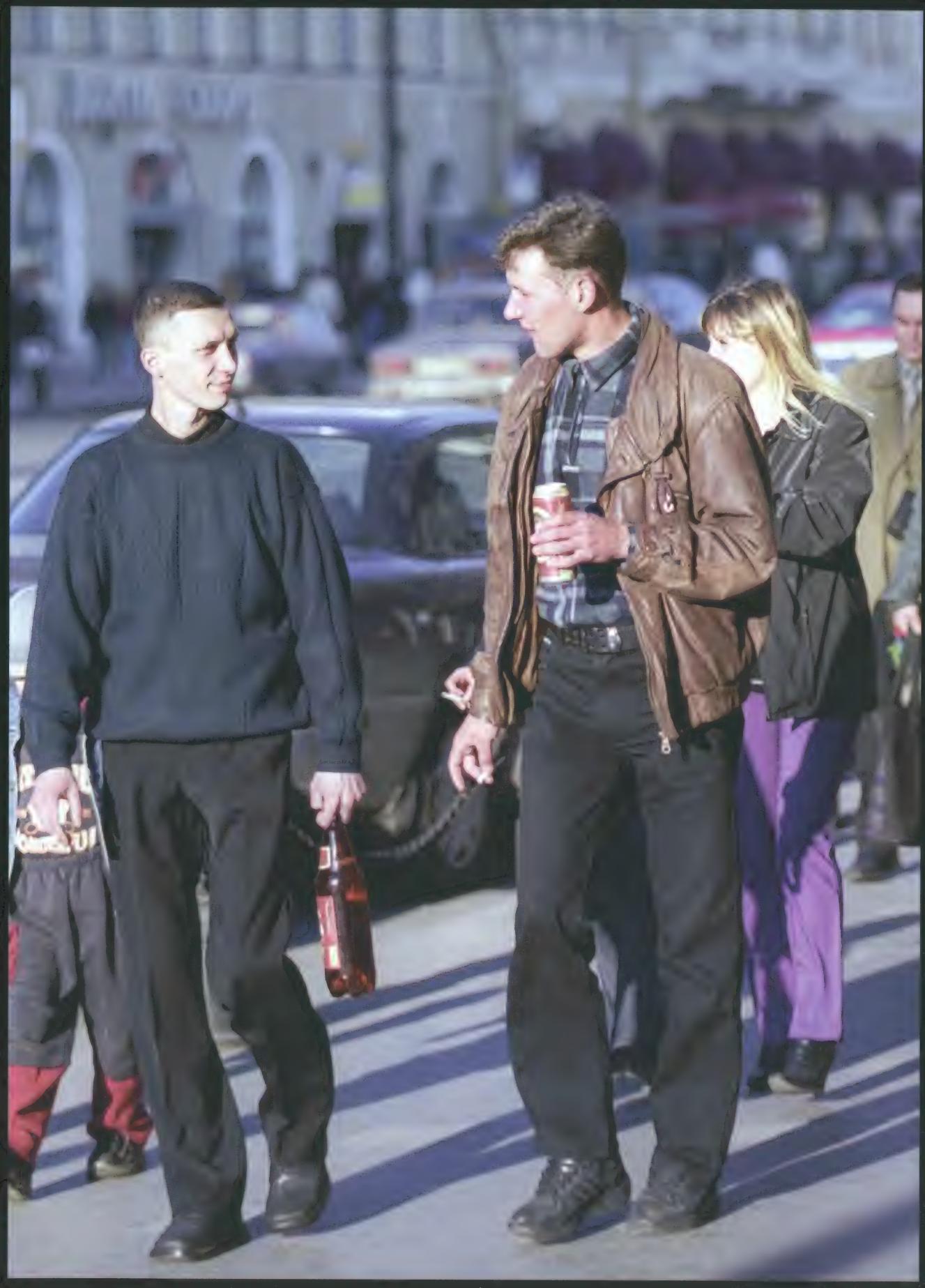




ON A NICE DAY

(Right) The onion shaped domes of the Church of the Resurrection add color to the sky. (Opposite Page) During the evening rush hour, the sidewalks of St. Petersburg's Nevsky Prospekt flow with people. Alcoholic beverages are sold on the street. (Below) During nice weather the parks become a popular hang out.





The Siberian Town

Khanty-Mansiysk is a town the size of Joplin located in the lowlands of western Siberia, named after the Khanty and Mansi people who are indigenous to the area. Khanty-Mansiysk is synonymous with oil to most Russians. The region accounts for 65 percent of Russia's total oil output.



A SLOWER LIFE

(Above) The architecture of modern buildings in Khanty-Mansiysk often has some resemblance to that of the native Siberian tepee-like tent homes made of deer skin, called chums. (Right) Evening walks are a common pastime in Khanty-Mansiysk, a city with no fast food restaurants.



Khanty-Mansiysk





COLORS OF KHANTY-MANSIYSK

(Above) A woman walks through the town center surrounded by government buildings and shopping areas. (Right) Children dance to "The Twist" by Chubby Checker during a performance at the Khanty-Mansiysk expo center.





Serving Russian



Historic building houses elegant vodka restaurant.

Kuzma Petrov-Vodkin may have been a famous artist from pre-Soviet Russia, but he has nothing to do with a restaurant carrying his name.

The Petrov-Vodkin Restaurant in central Moscow is only about one mile northeast of the Moscow Kremlin. The Petrov-Vodkin is one of the three best restaurants in Moscow.

"In two years, it will be the best," said Alexander Belov, owner.

Belov has plans for a new building for the restaurant near the outskirts of Moscow. He said he is "dissatisfied" with the current state of the restaurant and its kitchen.

If everything goes according to plan, Belov will move the Petrov-Vodkin to the new location within two years.

One main reason he wishes to change locations is because the building lies in the central part of Moscow, so the government basically controls the building itself, though Belov's company owns it. Belov said the state must approve any and all changes to the building, even down to the color of the paint on interior walls.

Belov bought the building that houses the restaurant in 1990. It was supposed to become the offices for his company, Technology Innovation and Production Company, a biotechnology company. Belov said the building was originally constructed in 1894 as an upscale residence (horses were once kept in the backyard during this time). During the Soviet era, the building was made into communal apartments, and it began to deteriorate. It took Belov and his company 10 years to reconstruct the building to its pre-revolution state.

"It was complete sh*t," Belov said. "We

"In two years, it will be the best."

Andy Tevis

Hospitality

Story & Photos by T.J. Gerlach



The building housing the Petrov-Vodkin (previous page) was originally an up-scale house. Kuzma Petrov-Vodkin, a pre-Soviet painter (above), supposedly had an apartment in the building, but he never moved into it.

invested a pretty good amount of money."

After trying to work with various contractors, Belov organized the reconstruction of the building himself. When the reconstruction was completed, much of the building was leased out, including one part to a fashion model agency. Often, the models dine at the Petrov-Vodkin.

"We decided not to lease the sub-floor," Belov said.

Instead, Belov said to his partners, "Let's set up a restaurant there."

But not just any restaurant; Belov knew what type of restaurant he wanted it to be.

He remembered his grandfather telling

him about a visit to the best restaurant in Moscow before the revolution took place. The restaurant was formal and the waiters hospitable.

Belov wished to base the Petrov-Vodkin on this ideal of "Russian hospitality" he learned about from his grandfather. Belov said he named the restaurant after the Russian artist because he said Petrov-Vodkin was supposed to have had an apartment in the building that he never moved into.

Belov said the Petrov-Vodkin is a "vodka restaurant." He said vodka is the symbol of Russian hospitality, so the two go hand-in-

hand. To help with this, the Petrov-Vodkin has more than 300 sorts of vodka, mostly Russian in origin, on hand.

Upon entering, patrons are greeted by a man wearing the same type of clothing a waiter would have worn in late 19th-century Russia — a button-up shirt, black pants, a green-striped vest (the same color as the walls) and a dark green apron.

After checking coats and bags, patrons are shown to their table. To the left of the coat check is the bar, complete with all the bottles of the 300 sorts of vodka served.

To the left is one dining room, and through a door by the coat check is the sec-



The Petrov-Vodkin carries more than 300 types of vodka (top) to suit anyone's taste. The restaurant serves a wide variety of dishes, (bottom) and a meal costs about \$5 U.S. (Photo by Andy Tevis). On some nights (right) a band of gypsies entertains diners.

ond, more secluded dining room.

In the main dining room, the walls are decorated with paintings of traditional Russia, as well as several unique and eye-catching vodka bottles on display in glass cabinets and on shelves. The bottles are from Belov's personal collection.

Windows along the back wall of the second dining room look into the backyard of the building. On the left of this room are three glass cabinets, all containing various vodka bottles and traditional vodka distilling instruments. More paintings decorate the opposite wall.

Regardless of the dining room, once

everyone in a party is seated, the waiter will open a menu to the first page and presents it to each individual. The menus (available in English) are all bound in a leather-type book and are about 20 pages in length.

These 20 pages are full of traditional Russian dishes prepared from all types of meat and vegetables. In Russia, restaurants' menus are usually bound this way and are usually just as long.

The Petrov-Vodkin's menu has many selections of appetizers and hors d'oeuvres, salads, soups, including Russian borscht, main entrees of various fish and

meats and desserts. A usual meal will have a course from each section.

Belov said when the restaurant moves, he will have fresh food brought in "from far off," including fish from Siberia and game birds.

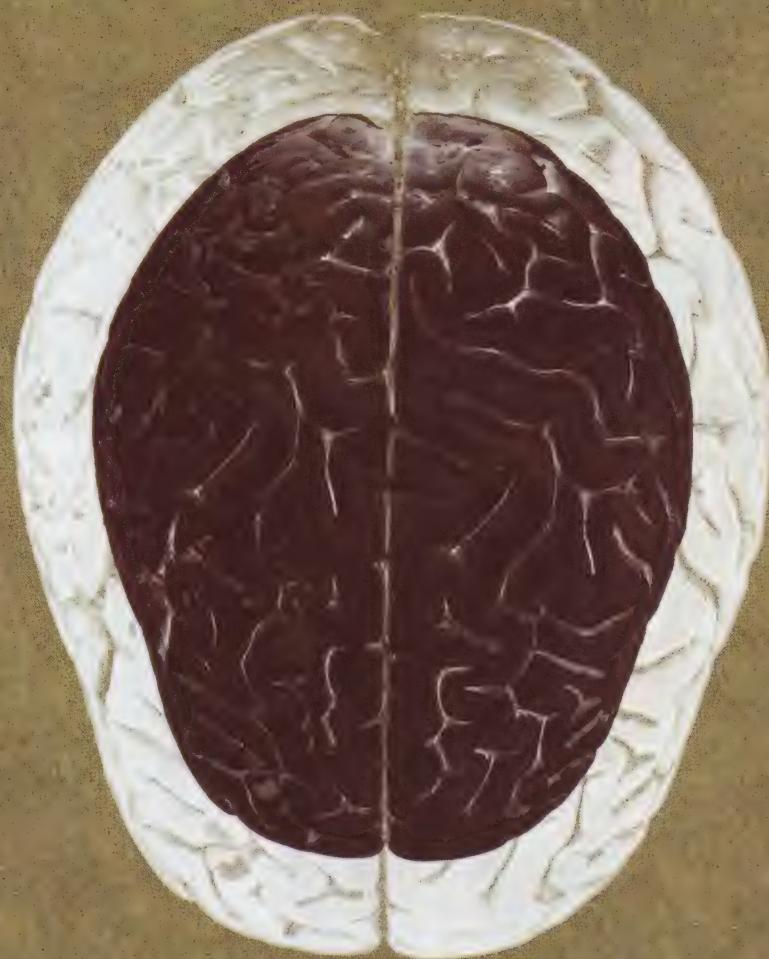
Many may believe such service and selection would come at a high cost, but it does not.

Belov said at the McDonald's around the corner, someone could have a meal for \$3 to \$4 U.S., but at the Petrov-Vodkin, the same person could have a long, relaxed meal with great food and even better service for only \$5 to \$6 U.S. ■

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Rubles and

skedot

Story by T.J. Gerlach

Russia's economy recovers after Soviet collapse.

Russia's economy strained through much turmoil after the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991. The ruble was unstable and remained so for several years.

Alexander Belov, owner of the Technology Innovation and Production Company and the Petrov-Vodkin

Restaurant, said many people still distrust the ruble and consequently invest their money in U.S. dollars, British pounds or in the Euro.

Dr. Alexander Semenov, dean of the philology department at Yugorsky State University in Khanty-Mansiysk, said he has no problems with the ruble and has his

money saved in rubles.

Belov said in 1993 and 1994 all production companies in Russia were failing, due to an unstable economy and red tape involved in establishing a business. He said trying to succeed legally requires many forms and signatures from officials throughout the government.

Legitimate business is hard to conduct, but Belov goes through every step, even if it takes him months to complete the process.

When his company first started restoring the building the Petrov-Vodkin Restaurant resides in, Belov had numerous forms and signatures required to get anything done, including hiring contractors, many of whom were crooked anyway.

In the end, Belov undertook the restoration himself. That was his first project of this kind.

Since then, he has ventured into architecture, designing houses in an upscale

neighborhood on the outskirts of Moscow, including his own home.

In all of his projects, Belov makes sure to go through the process of ensuring he does everything legitimately, and he also makes sure he pays all applicable taxes, which not too many Russians do, Belov said.

When Russian millionaires were arrested during the past decade, Belov said they were arrested for tax evasion, as Al Capone was in the United States.

Belov also said Russia's debt of about \$150 billion U.S. is being repaid. This is possible because of a favorable market position in the oil and gas industry, two of Russia's main exports. Because of these and Russia's other major exports, metals and lumber, the economy can fluctuate depending on the price of these goods on the world market.

The climate of business in Russia can be hostile to investors, both domestic and for-

eign, and thus investment in Russian business is slow to gain. Widespread corruption in business and in politics also contribute to a slowly stabilizing economy.

Belov has faith in the economy and acknowledges its advantages over communism.

"I guess the main problem of communism is that the individual was neglected," he said.

He also said even today the distribution of wealth is unfair.

Vladimir Supik, a professor of philology at Moscow International University, thinks corruption is still too widespread in Russia for wealth to equalize.

"You have to work a lot to make a living," he said. "Work a lot, but people in charge don't allow people to make enough money."

He said many of those in charge are left over from the Soviet era, so those people still put their interests above others. 





Andy Tevis

(Left) Many Russians say the distribution of wealth in Russia is uneven, even though the economy has stabilized. While most Russians have gained trust in the ruble (above), some still invest their money in U.S. dollars, British pounds or in the Euro.

"In all of his projects, Belov makes sure to go through the process of ensuring he does everything legitimately, and he also makes sure he pays all applicable taxes, which not too many Russians do, Belov said."



Andy Tevis

Party Politics

Story by Andy Tevis

United Russia has become the most dominant party in Russia.

On the wall of United Russia's regional party headquarters in Khanty-Mansiysk hangs a photo of Russian President Vladimir Putin along with the party's flag.

Four members sat down and enthusiastically explained through an interpreter what the United Russia party is all about. They also talked a little about the current situation for political parties in Russia.

Anatoliy V. Dubovik said two years ago there were 193 federal parties in Russia. That number decreased to 43 after a new law was adopted to limit the amount of parties eligible to participate in elections.

"There are members of parties and supporters," Dubovik said.

In Russia, most politicians are supporters of certain parties, but they are not members of specific parties. Dubovik predicts, however, that during the next election, 80 percent will be members of political parties. United Russia currently has the most supporters within the legislative branch of government.

"Officially Putin is not a member of the party," Dubovik said, "but he can be for or against a party."

To participate in elections, political parties, political organizations and political movements must register with the government.

To register under the new law, a party must have more than 10,000 members, branches in at least 50 percent of federation units, and a minimum of 100 members in each branch.

"All parties are very serious," Dubovik

said. "That's why the president is neutral."

United Russia became an official party when it registered in 2001. The party was created when the Fatherland Party, All-Russia Party and Unity Party of Russia merged together to create a newer, more improved "party of power."

The party's logo contains the Russian flag, the geographical shape of the country and a bear.

"The bear is a symbol of power in

"We want to see our country rich, strong and to have a place in the world society."

Russia," Dubovik said.

Dubovik said United Russia hopes to make many reforms in the country, not only in large cities but in all regions. United Russia is the first party to support women leaders in Russia.

United Russia is a pro-government political party. It backs Putin and can be seen as his vehicle in the legislature.

A former KGB officer, Putin has been the president of Russia since the year 2000. On December 31, 1999, Boris Yeltsin resigned and made Putin the second (acting) president of the Russian Federation. Proper presidential elections were later

held, and Putin won. He went on to win a second full term with 71 percent of the votes during the March 2004 presidential election.

The president currently is not permitted under the Constitution of Russian Federation to run for a third term, but he currently has enough support necessary in the legislature to amend the constitution.

United Russia currently controls the majority of the 450 legislative seats, allowing Putin to dominate legislature and push through many of the government's bills.

United Russia describes itself as a centrist party that openly supports the policies of Putin. It favors a strong executive branch as a guarantee of political stability and constitutional order. According to the manifesto adopted on March 29, 2003, United Russia aspires to be "not only a parliamentary-majority, but a national-majority party."

Other parties retaining seats in the legislature are the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia and the Homeland Bloc.

The Communist Party is a somewhat reformed party, but has never wielded power after it relinquished it in the 1990s. It mainly represents the older generation and others nostalgic for the days of the Soviet Union. The Liberal Democratic Party is an extreme, right wing party.

"We want to see our country rich, strong and to have a place in the world society," Dubovik said. 

A 21st Century University

Story & Photo by T.J. Gerlach

Yugorsky State University combines three institutions under one name.

In August 2001, the Russian national government signed order No. 1069, creating a new university in the town of Khanty-Mansiysk, the capital of the Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug. The university was created on the basis of Nizhnevartovsky State Pedagogical Institute, the Siberian State Road-Transport Academy and Tyumen Agricultural Academy (Institute of the Northern Nature Exploitation). YSU is one of the largest universities in the Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug.

The buildings to house the fledgling institute were completed in 2002. The campus contains four or five main buildings, including one housing the student cafeteria. The main campus is only a few blocks from the main square of Khanty-Mansiysk, where the okrug's government building is located.

Yugorsky has 199 instructors, ranging from 23 full professors to 61 senior teachers. The university has seven departments: pedagogical, engineering, computer science and applied mathematics, Obsko-Ugrian philology, faculty of arts, wildlife management and philology. The university is developing plans to offer programs for doctorates of sciences.

Unlike the universities in large cities like Moscow, many of Yugorsky's 2,000 students come from all around the region. These students live in hostels several miles from the campus, but buses carry them to and from campus. Some students do live at home and commute from there to attend classes.

The university has two newspapers. The primary newspaper is published monthly by the administration of the university and is considered the official newspaper of the university. The second is a student-run newspaper, also published monthly.

Facilities of the university include some of the most up-to-date computer and electronic equipment available. These facilities include the Institute of the Right, Economy

and Management; the Scientific Language and Publishing Center; the scientific library, with separate study/reading room; and a fitness center.

"We are discussing plans for an exchange with this university," said Dr. Tatiana Karmanova, director of the International Language Resource Center at Missouri Southern.

Southern and Yugorsky State University would like to develop an exchange program in the near future.

Karmanova said the details are being worked out.

"I believe both parties are interested," Karmanova said. "We will definitely work something out with this institution."

Karmanova said Southern has several institutions in Russia to work with, but she said she would like to see an exchange develop between YSU and Southern. She said Yugorsky would be a good institution to exchange with because both universities use technology.

Dr. Alexander Semenov, dean of the school of philology at YSU, is excited about the opportunity. He said he hopes to see students from Southern studying at YSU. Many of the students at YSU share Semenov's excitement.

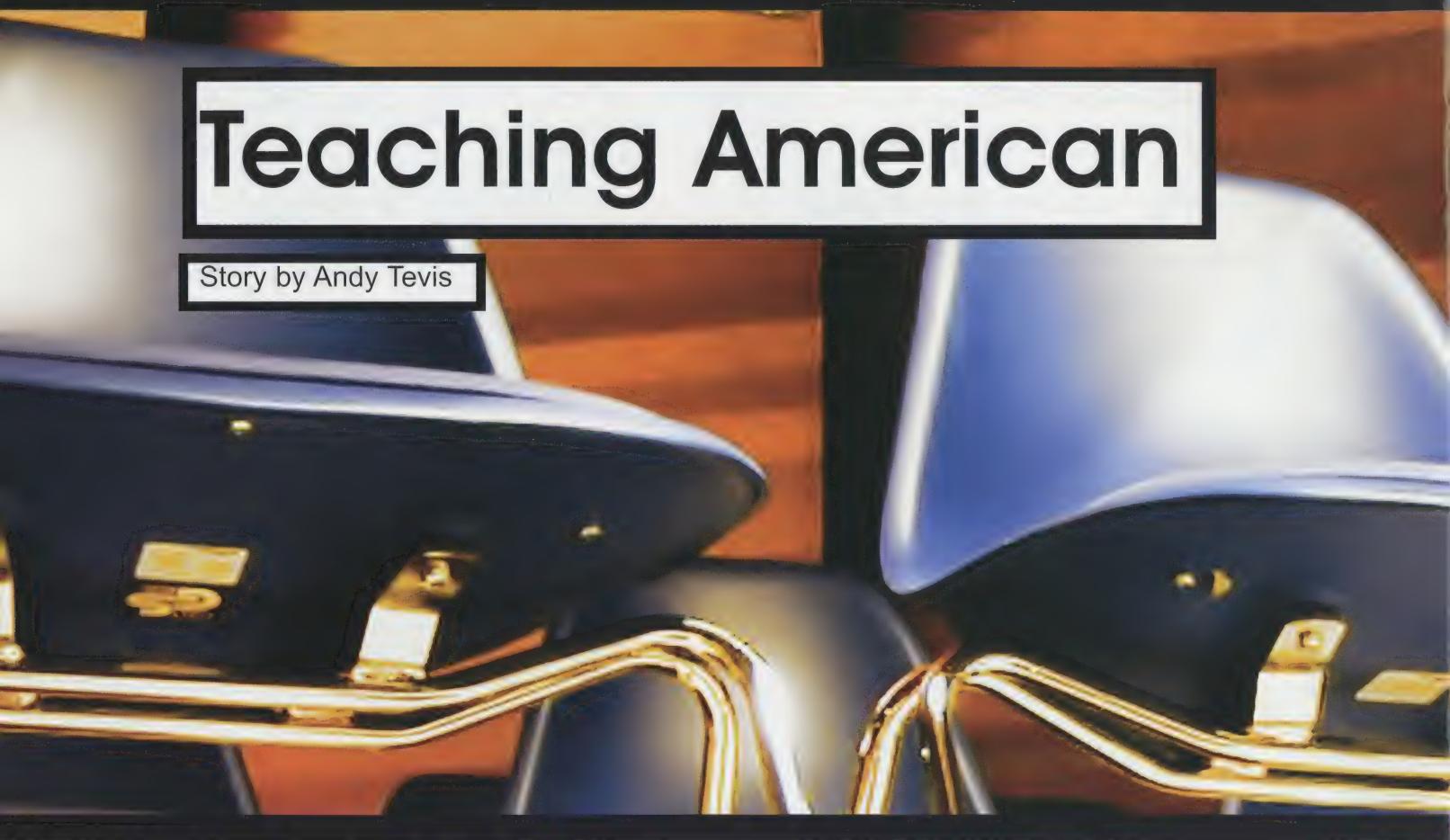
YSU's Web site is www.ugrasu.ru. However, it is only available in Russian. 



Yugorsky State University was established in 2001 under the order of the Russian national government.

Teaching American

Story by Andy Tevis



American Center promotes mutual understanding by providing resources.

On a rainy day, in a small presentation room at the American Center in Moscow, about 15 middle-aged Russians carefully listened to the Lauren Hill song, "Nothing Even Matters."

"What do you think 'Nothing Really Matters' might mean?" Gabriel Skop asked after he stopped the CD mid-song.

After some short discussion, Skop played the song again, breaking the song down piece-by-piece and explaining the English meanings of the lyrics. He repeated the question, "What do you think the verse 'nothing even matters' means?"

After a moment of thought, several people enthusiastically responded. Eventually one person said the song might be about love. Skop's face lit up in excitement.

"Yeah, that's right," he said. "It's about being in love with somebody so much that you don't care about anything else."

Skop said many people attending his presentations initially seem surprised when he asks questions and creates group discussions.

"The academic tradition here is one of experts and followers," he said.

Skop tries to teach people to challenge their instructors.

Learning English through American music was part of a series of presentations that Skop gave at the American Center in Moscow.

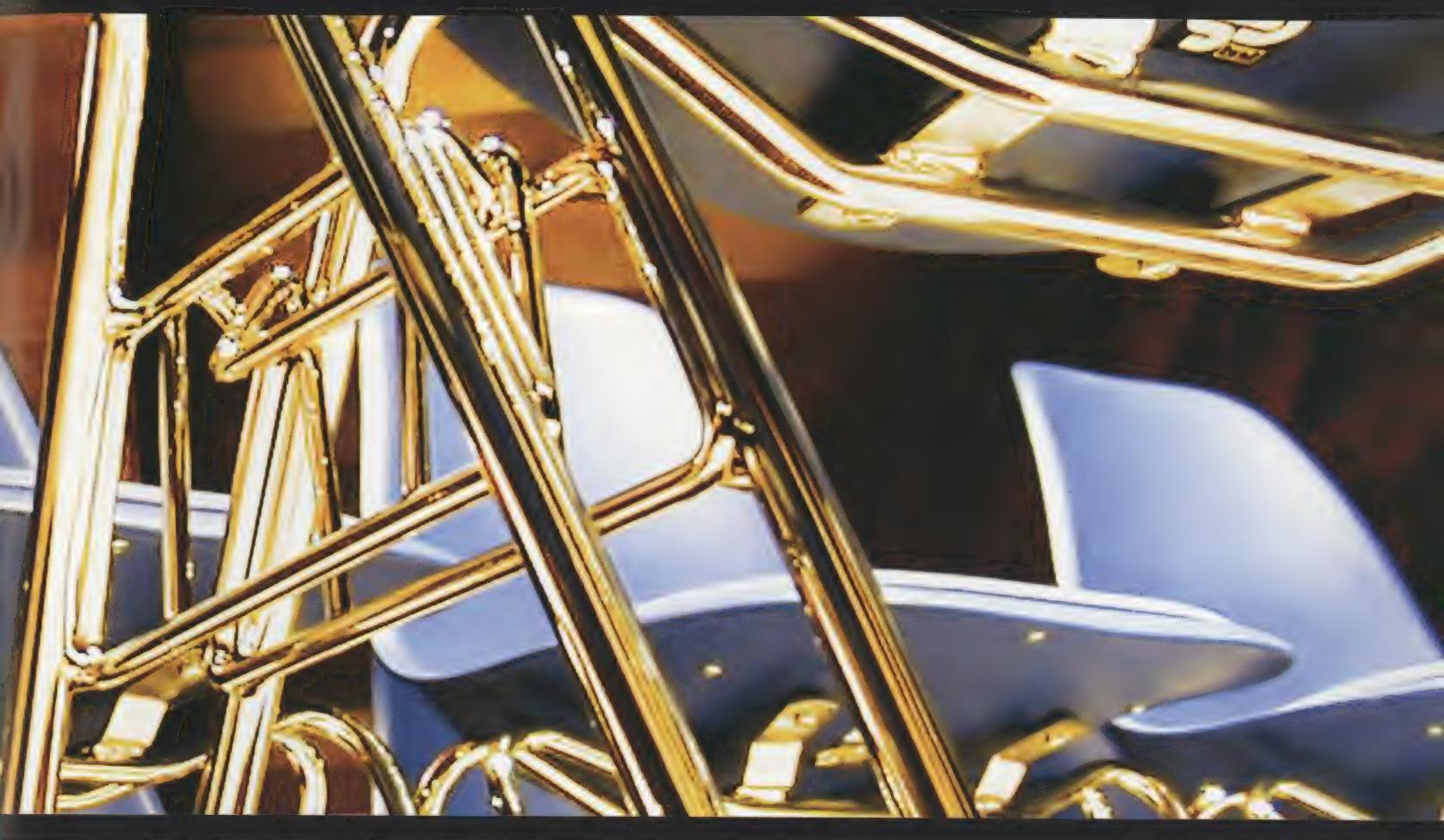
Originally from New York, Skop works at the American Center through the Senior English Language Fellow Program, a program supported by the U.S. Department of State. He lives in

"The academic tradition here is one of experts and followers."

the city of Saratov, a city located in the Volga River Valley region where his host school, Saratov State University, is located.

Skop said he gives the presentations in an effort to bring a different perspective to learning English. Without the presentations, many people would be limited to books and videos, he said.

"In my city, it's different from Moscow," Skop said. "People



tend not to have English language skills."

Skop said Moscow is very diverse. However, the smaller cities in Russia are not accustomed to foreigners. Many people look at him with curiosity, knowing he is an outsider by his appearance.

There are five American Centers in Russia along with 20 smaller satellite locations called American Corners scattered throughout the country.

American Centers and Corners are American-style libraries created to help increase mutual understanding between Russia and the United States by making available information about America in a variety of formats. The libraries host many events



Gabriel Skop gives an English presentation at the American Center in Moscow.

and presentations in an effort to bring Americans and Russians closer together. They promote mutual understanding between the United States and Russia through the teaching of U.S. history, government, society, culture and the English language. The libraries offer books, CD-ROMs, videos, Internet access, programs and a bilingual

Andy Tevis

librarian to help find desired information about the United States.

"Russia is going through a really problematic time in history," Skop said.

"It's my job to expose people to resources and new ways of working with information." 

The 3 'Rs'

Story & Photos by T.J. Gerlach



Russia's system of education is not too different from American system.

Prior to the Bolshevik revolution in Russia, only members of the upper or middle class would be educated.

During the Soviet era, education was made a core part of society. The Soviet Union was able to maintain a literacy rate of about 98 percent, and modern Russia has been able to maintain this level of education.

About 95 percent of secondary school graduates choose to continue their education at a college or university. Entry into these institutions is highly competitive, as most institutions only have a limited number of spots for incoming students. All students wishing to continue their education must take college entrance exams. Only the highest-scoring students will be accepted into college.

University education usually requires five years of education. The format is a three-year format, with two additional years. After the first three years, students receive the equivalent of a bachelor's degree then continue studying for a master's. All students will write a thesis before graduating.

Students usually attend a university near their home and live with their parents, often until well after completing their education. University education is free at public institutions in Russia, and students can earn stipends if their grades are good enough.

Universities require students to take certain "obligatory" classes, such as mathe-

matics and physical education. Also, all males are still required to take military training, and all females are required to take nursing courses. This is a tradition remaining from the Soviet Union.

Anna Sobornova, a 19-year-old student in her third year at Moscow State Linguistics University, lives at home in the town of Zhukovsky, outside of Moscow. Sobornova said her daily commute to the university takes two hours each way. Sobornova, who is studying languages and

how to teach them, said her classes do not begin until the middle of the day, because interpreters at MSLU are given privilege, and they study in the morning. She said she does not pay for obligatory classes, but students can pay to take physical activity courses for fun.

Typical college classes last 80 minutes with 10-minute breaks in between. There are only summer and winter breaks.

Tests are given at the end of the semesters, but testing periods can last a month. Sobornova spends most of her free time studying for her classes.

"It's getting popular to study well, not just to study, but study well," she said.

Vladimir Supik, a professor of philology at Moscow International University, started teaching in 1984 at Moscow State University. When Supik, who teaches Russian and Russian literature to foreign students, began teaching, he said the texts he had were "stupid" texts written by Vladimir Lenin and his followers. Instead of using these texts, Supik wrote and printed his own texts and used them.

Primary schooling in Russia begins when children are 6 or 7 years old. Students attend compulsory school for nine years.

After completing the first nine years, most students choose to continue on for another two years at the equivalent of an American high school. Some students enter professional technical schools or college at this time instead. These schools

"Also, all males are still required to take military training, and all females are required to take nursing courses. This is a tradition remaining from the Soviet Union."

teach professional knowledge as well as general education.

Children will attend the same school from primary school until the post-secondary/pre-higher education. This means school buildings are normally large to facilitate the number of students and faculty attending each day.

A typical day of compulsory education consists of five or six 40-minute classes per day, with a 10 to 20 minute break between classes. Classes are held Monday through Saturday.

When the senior students near the end of their education, they must take exams before graduating. Dr. Tatiana Karmanova, director of the International Language Resource Center, said these tests are taken after the final day of classes. After classes are over on the final day, students hit the streets. Some of these students wear traditional school uniforms, but most wear brightly colored sashes on this day.

While out on the town, graduates meet with their friends and go around having a good time, hanging out in parks or public squares. Many graduates can be seen consuming alcohol throughout the day.

Universities are more typical of an

American college or university. They have several departments, and typically, universities will have several buildings throughout a city, especially larger universities. Each of these buildings would house specific departments of the university itself.

"In Soviet times, there were students from Cuba and North Korea," Supik said.

He said the North Korean students expected the type of material from Lenin's texts, so that was what he used for those students. He said the North Koreans were studious, but the Cubans were more fun. Now, Supik teaches students from several different nations, including the United States.

MIU is a private university whose president is an ex-mayor of Moscow and whose vice president is Mikhail Gorbachev, a former president of the Soviet Union.

Sobornova said some students at her university are from former Soviet republics. Both Sobornova and Supik agreed that such interaction among so many other nations was impossible during Soviet times.

Sobornova has been able to travel to six other countries.

"I like traveling very much," she

said. "It's good practice with language."

Sobornova has not been to an English-speaking country yet, but she wants to visit Great Britain or the United States some day. She said she attended a specialized school in Zhukovsky where she started learning English in the second grade.

Foreign language is required for all Russian students, but many schools do not start this training until the early secondary education.

Other required courses are similar to those in the United States - mathematics, writing, sciences and history - though Soviet history may be taught less or avoided completely.

Under the Soviet Union, students would be required to take classes in Soviet history as well as the theory of Marxism. Karmanova said students attend school for longer today than under the Soviet Union.

Information for this story came from "The Differences Between the American and the Russian Educational Systems" by Julia Thompson, available at <http://www.ecok.edu/dept/english/write/eddiff.html>.



Graduates wear bright sashes and celebrate with friends after completing their classes.

Test, Test Test

Story & Photo by T.J. Gerlach

Students hire tutors to help pass college entrance exams.





Yugorsky State University in Khanty-Mansiysk requires potential students to pass an exam related to the chosen speciality.

After secondary school students finish the Russian equivalent of 11th grade, those wishing to enter a college, university or other higher education institution must take tests in order to get into an institution.

It is said most college students in Russia are either fairly wealthy or very smart. Why? College entrance exams are intensive and cover numerous subjects.

Most entrance exams cover math, history, foreign language and writing composition. Competition to get into colleges and universities is tough; the institutions have a limited number of positions available for students. Thus, only the students making the highest scores on these exams are accepted into college. In such a system, it is not surprising for some people to use personal connections and bribery to earn a position in a college or university.

Currently, the Russian Ministry of Education is working on standardizing high school exit exams that form part of the entrance process. All students wishing to continue their education would take the same test, whether they live in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Khanty-Mansiysk or all the way across the country in Vladivostok.

Vladimir Supik, a professor of philology at Moscow International University, does not think this will be accepted at all universities. He said school teachers make more money in Russia than university professors. He said the average salary for a full professor at Moscow State University, a public university, is \$150 U.S. (4350 RUR) per month.

To make up for poor salaries, most professors supplement their income by tutoring students for the entrance exams.

"This system also existed in Soviet time, but salaries weren't as low," Supik said.

Professors will form groups of about five students and give lessons to the groups in the evenings. Each student pays about \$20 U.S. (580 RUR) per hour for the lessons, he said.

Supik also said this practically guarantees entrance to the university to those he tutors.

Anna Sobornova, 19, said she had tutors for her college entrance exams. Sobornova, who attends Moscow State Linguistics University, had to take three tests to gain entrance into her university: English composition, Russian composition and history. She said the history exam had many questions about the Soviet era and about Russian culture.

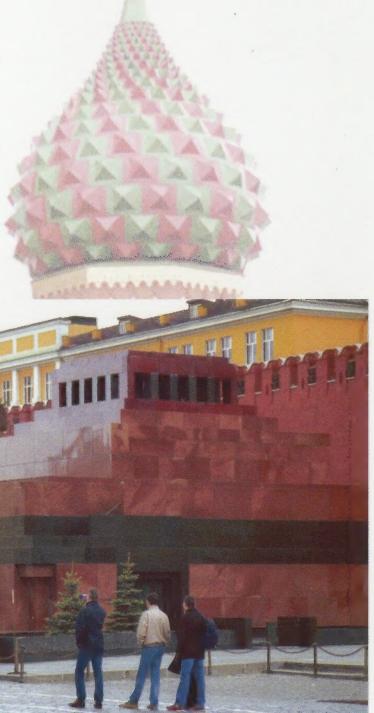
Sobornova said she paid \$50 U.S. (1450 RUR) per hour for her tutors. She also said she heard some students paid as much as \$100 U.S. (2900 RUR) per hour for the tutors they had.

Sobornova said about 800 people applied to her university when she did, but there were only 120 spots for students at the university.

The Russia Semester

Selected Events

- "After Tsars and Soviets: Russia's Future and Why It Matters" Gockel International Symposium, Sept. 23, Taylor Auditorium
- Southern Theatre presents: "An Evening of Chekhov: *The Celebration, The Marriage Proposal* and *The Brute*," 7:30 p.m. Oct. 12-16, Bud Walton Theatre
- Barynya, Russian folk dance and music ensemble, 7 p.m. Oct. 28, Taylor Auditorium
- Russian Film Festival, ongoing throughout the semester, Cornell Auditorium in Matthews Hall



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